

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed December 14, 2004. In order to advance prosecution of this case, Applicants amend Claims 1, 13 and 15, cancel Claims 12, 25 and 27-30, and add new Claims 31-34. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Information Disclosure Statement(s)

Applicants submitted Information Disclosure Statements on December 29, 2003, and November 12, 2004. Applicants did not received PTO-1449 forms, initialed by the Examiner, indicating that the Information Disclosure Statements submitted December 29, 2003, and November 12, 2004 were reviewed by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner confirm the review of the Information Disclosure Statements submitted December 29, 2003, and November 12, 2004, by returning initialed PTO-1449 forms. For the convenience of the Examiner, copies of these Information Disclosure Statements, along with copies of the acknowledgement return postcards, are attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication by the Examiner that Claims 13, 14 and 25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have re-written Claim 13 as new independent Claim 31 and Claim 14 as new independent Claim 33, which makes these claims allowable as well as new dependent Claims 32 and 34 allowable. Applicants have also amended Claim 15 to add the limitations of Claim 25 to make independent Claim 15 allowable as well as dependent Claims 16-24 and 26, which depend from Claim 15.

Section 102(e)/103(a) Rejections

The Office Action rejects Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9-12, 15-24, and 26-30 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2002/0147521 issued to Mok et al. ("Mok"). The Office Action also rejects Claims 5, 6, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as

being unpatentable over *Mok* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,526,327 issued to Kar et al. (“*Kar*”). The Office Action further rejects Claims 8 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Mok* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,349,600 issued to Davies et al. (“*Davies*”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons stated below.

Independent Claim 1 was amended to include the limitations of dependent Claim 12 and now recites, in part:

“[a] deposition station comprising . . . a laser-based deposition system comprising: a laser head; and a powder delivery system comprising a hopper adapted to contain a powder and continuously feed the powder through an output of the hopper, a metering device adjacent the output of the hopper adapted to receive the powder continuously fed through the output of the hopper, and a vacuum powder removal device operable to remove the powder from the top surface via a vacuum

Applicants submit that *Mok* does not teach or suggest the above recited limitations. The Examiner states at page 4 of the Office Action that the majority of the above limitations are disclosed by *Mok* at pg. 6, paragraph 125 and pg. 7, paragraph 137. However, nowhere in these paragraphs of *Mok* is the above limitations disclosed. Paragraph 125 discloses “power feeders,” but does state anything about the continuous feeding of powder through an output of a hopper. And paragraph 137 discloses “a vacuum chuck,” but this vacuum chuck is used in conjunction with pallet location and has nothing to do with a laser-based deposition system.

Thus, for at least these reasons, *Mok* does not teach or suggest each and every claim limitation of independent Claim 1, as amended. Hence, *Mok* does not anticipate independent Claim 1 or the claims that depend from independent Claim 1; namely, Claims 2-11 and 13-14. Reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully requested.


CONCLUSIONS

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other apparent reasons, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending Claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicants stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

Applicants believe no fee is due. However, should there be a fee discrepancy, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. **02-0384** of **Baker Botts L.L.P.**

Respectfully submitted,

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